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Ga. high court to hear fornication law challenge
Ousted gay mayor fights for return
Gay Asian groups host cross-cultural benefit
Town hall meetings encourage activism
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LOCAL

Town hall meetings encourage activism

Upcoming events focus on ending job bias, boosting Black Pride

By CHRISTOPHER SEELY

Two town hall meetings for gay men and lesbians take place next week. On July 8, political and legal activists will host a panel discussion on anti-gay job discrimination. On July 14, black gay organizers will offer a forum with opportunities to become involved in the final planning and volunteer efforts for Black Pride on Labor Day weekend.

Stephen Scarborough, a staff attorney for Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund, joins panelists at a town hall meeting presenting the public with information about ENDA, and how to support it locally. (Photo by R.O. Youngblood)

The Human Rights Campaign, Georgia Equality and Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund will join together to present a panel discussion about the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, a bill that would ban sexual orientation job bias slated for a vote in the U.S. Senate this year.

HRC organized the discussion to inform people in Atlanta how they can help pass the bill, organzers said.

"We chose Atlanta to urge members of the Georgia delegation who haven't co-sponsored to co-sponsor and support the bill," said Diana Mason, HRC coordinator.

In Georgia and 37 other states, working men and women can be fired from their jobs because of their sexual orientation, according to HRC.

INFO

'Employing Equality'
July 8, 7 - 9 p.m.
Colony Square Sheraton
188 14th St.
Atlanta, GA 30361
404-210-6239
mbellhrcatlanta@aol.com

Only one U.S. senator and three U.S. House members from Georgia, all Democrats, currently co-sponsor the bill: Sen. Max Cleland and Reps. John Lewis, Cynthia McKinney and Sanford Bishop.

Black Pride Town Hall Meeting
July 14, 3:30 - 5:30 p.m.
Auburn Avenue Research Library, 4th floor auditorium
101 Auburn Ave.
Atlanta, GA 30303
404-872-3600

Atlanta City Council President Cathy Woolard will give opening remarks at the free event. Panelists include Robin Shahar, a city attorney fired from her job with the state because she is gay; Allen Thornell, executive director of Georgia Equality; Ronald Moore, diversity manager for Hewlett-Packard; and Stephen Scarborough, staff attorney for Lambda.

The July 14 Black Gay Pride meeting will be hosted by In the Life Atlanta, official organizers of the Labor Day weekend event.

"We want to give folks the chance to get involved and to see how much work we've already done," said Jimmie Scott, event coordinator.

Scott said ITLA needs 50 more volunteers for media outreach, public relations, club outreach and sponsorship to ensure Black Pride's success, he said.

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If you know Dorothy

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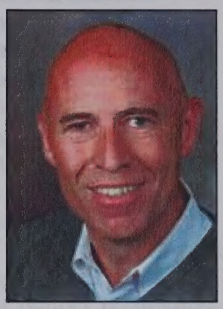
atlanta/ga. news

Atlanta-based Earthlink offers DP benefits



Greg Stromberg, who is gay and executive vice president of employee services at EarthLink, said the company has the 'most amazingly open environment.'

ATLANTA -- EarthLink, an Internet provider based in Atlanta, added domestic partner benefits to its employee benefits policy when it merged with Mindspring in February 2000. The Human Rights Campaign, a national gay rights group that monitors workplace policies, publicized the EarthLink policy this month. Before the merger, Mindspring offered domestic partner benefits and EarthLink did not. Greg Stromberg, executive vice president of employee services, said the strategy behind merging the policies of both companies "was to take the best programs from both companies." EarthLink now extends DP benefits to both gay and straight couples. "We felt that people should be treated fairly based on their individual choices," said Stromberg, who is gay. "If it was right to offer coverage for married people, it was right to offer coverage for unmarried couples." The Internet company does not have any official gay or lesbian groups that meet, Stromberg said. Rather, several internal e-mailing lists designed specifically for gay issues exist for employees "because we are an Internet company," he said.

'Movie Nite' to raise funds for The Center

ATLANTA -- In the Life Atlanta, the official organizers of Atlanta's Black Gay Pride, and the Center, the city's gay resource facility, jointly present "Movie Nite at the Center," a double feature of movies with gay themes. The showing on July 6 includes "Relax… It's Just Sex," a poly-sexual, multi-racial comedy, and "Blind Faith," an intense drama focusing on themes of racism, social justice and homophobia. "One is really fun and one is somewhat serious," said Michael E. Slaughter, co-chair of ITLA's board of directors. Slaughter emphasized that movie night organizers wanted the evening to appeal to everyone. "Both movies have homosexuality, but that is not the primary focus of the night," he said. The focus, Slaughter said, is "getting people together to help support the center and raise money, and to give members of the general community something that they might not normally have the chance to

do." Refreshments will be served and a $5 donation is suggested. Atlanta's Black Gay Pride celebration takes place on Labor Day weekend.

INFO

EarthLink
1375 Peachtree St., level A
Atlanta, GA 30309
404-815-0770
www.earthlink.com

Movie Nite at the Center
July 6, 8 p.m.
159 Ralph McGill Blvd.
404-523-7500

Ryan White Project
Office of the Chairman
Fulton County Board of Commissioners
141 Pryor St., Suite 8025
Atlanta, GA 30303
404-893-0791
www.co.fulton.ga.us

Hotlanta Volleyball Association
770-621-5062
www.hotlantavolleyball.org

Metro Atlanta HIV Council seeks members

ATLANTA -- The Metro Atlanta HIV Planning Council, which allocates federal money to individuals and agencies in the Atlanta area for HIV/AIDS services, will accept applications until July 22 from anyone interested in joining the council. The federal government awards the money under Title I of the Ryan White CARE Act to cities hit hardest by the AIDS epidemic, said Jeff Cheek, who oversees Ryan White funding as associate to the chair of the Fulton County Commission. The council's duties include setting priorities for how federal funding should be spent and developing a comprehensive plan and a needs assessment to set up a service continuum, Cheek said. The council seeks members who can bring first-hand experiences with them. "We've seen over the years that we have a lot of funded agency representatives, but we have been missing people who are actually getting the services," Cheek said. Last year, the council dispersed almost $16.4 million.

Efforts underway for women's volleyball division

DECATUR -- The Hotlanta Volleyball Association launched a women's division this month. Mark Davis, director for the Hotlanta Volleyball Classic XII Tournament set for July 26-28, said that the women's division got off to a "slow start" at its first meeting on June 2 at Agnes Scott College. "We were interfering with the Hotlanta softball schedule," Davis said. He expects more women to participate now, since the softball season ended. The women's division began as an effort to reach out to lesbians, Davis said. "Most of the time, women are forced to play positions they are not used to playing. The new standards are set to women's height," Davis said. Women will be welcome this weekend to play in the Pride tournament at Piedmont Park. The tournament, with a women-specific net, begins at 8 a.m. and ends at 3 p.m. on Saturday. Teams and individuals register at the tournament and a $40 donation per team is requested, Davis said.

CHRISTOPHER SEELY

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Out in Atlanta: Atlanta gets 'Naked'
Appointments
Out on the Town: Artist sees auras
Dining: Au revoir, St. Amour
Television: Questioning the after 'Life'
Books: Murder in a small town
Dish: Sir Elton loses pounds
Fringe: It takes two to interior happiness
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appointments

July 5 to 11, 2002

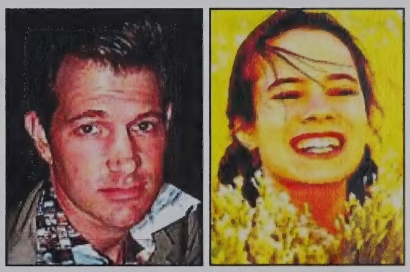
To add a listing, e-mail calendar@sovo.com, call 404-876-1819, ext. 34, or fax to 404-876-2709.

SATURDAY JULY 6

The Center and ITLA host a **double feature movie night** beginning at 8 p.m. 'Relax… It's Just Sex,' a captivating poly-sexual, multi-racial romantic comedy featuring a star-studded cast, explores the relationships of a close-knit group of friends. 'Blind Faith,' the second feature, deals with racism, homophobia and social justice in 1950s Brooklyn. The Center, 159 Ralph McGill Blvd., Suite 600. 404-523-7500

SUNDAY JULY 7

Head on over to Chastain Park Ampitheatre tonight for a melodic double bill with two big-name crooners. Sexy and talented **Chris Isaak** joins the smooth-stylings of **Natalie Merchant**. The concert begins at 7 p.m. at Chastain Park Ampitheatre, 404-249-6400



Chris Isaak and Natalie Merchant

Etta James

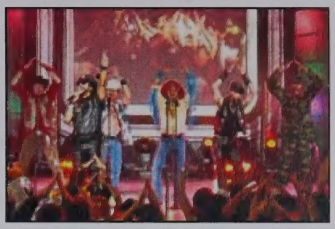
TUESDAY JULY 9

At last, **Etta James** sings in Atlanta. After a recent postponement, Earthlink Live finally slated the iconic and timeless performer for 7 p.m. Tickets cost $37. Earthlink Live, 1374 Peachtree St. 404-885-1365

WEDNESDAY July 10

Put on your dancing shoes as one of the defining bands of the '70s disco craze, the

Village People, hosts **'Wednesday Night Fever'** with such gay anthems as 'YMCA,' 'Macho Man' and 'In the Navy.' Mirror balls, a light show and other retro magic are on hand at the Chastain Park Amphitheatre at 8 p.m. 404-733-5000 or classicchastain.org



Village People

Thursday
JULY 11

Tough as nails R&B crossover artist **P!nk** gets the girlies all hot with her bad ass moves and soulful singing. Her flaming hair streaks across the stage at the Tabernacle at 7:30 p.m. 152 Luckie St. 404-659-9022

P!nk

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Boys for Boys!

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Gay endorsement bypasses gay candidate
High court won't hear lesbian mom's appeal
Lewis applauds anti-gay Okla. Congress member
Black Gay Pride sets parade route, schedule
New city attorney will face gay policy issues
Norcross restaurant accused of HIV discrimination
Atlanta/Across Ga. News
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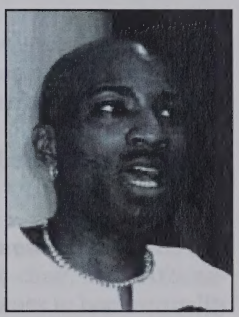
LOCAL

Black Gay Pride sets parade route, schedule

Activists pack Auburn Library to volunteer for Labor Day event

By JENNIFER J. SMITH



Jimmie Scott, co-chair of the Black Gay Pride March, led a group of 150 activists through possible march routes and the weekend schedule for the Labor Day festivities. (Photo by R.O. Youngblood)

Over 150 African-American gay activists, ministers, youth and observers packed the first-ever Black Gay Pride Town Hall meeting at the Auburn Avenue Research Library on July 14 to "stand up and represent," according to organizers.

Attendees voted on the route for the second annual Black Gay Pride March on Sept. 2, and more than 100 people signed up to volunteer at the event.

Organizers outlined an initial schedule of workshops and luncheons, "and we prayed together, sang together and came together as a diverse, talented, loving community," said Jimmie Scott, march co-chair.

Atlanta's Black Gay Pride has been organized since 1996 by In The Life Atlanta -- a black lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered advocacy group -- "but has been going on since before any of us can remember," said Sharon Hodnett, ITLA co-chair.

The event now boasts about 15,000 visitors over an often-steamy 3-day Labor Day weekend, organizers said.

Last year, organizers hoped for 100 participants in the nation's first Black Gay Pride March. Despite heavy rain, about 200 people walked the two-mile route from the state capitol to the Martin Luther King Jr. Center.

This year's chosen route is three miles beginning at the Atlanta University Center, winding around Joseph Lowery Street, and ending up on Peeples Street at the West End Mall, according to Mellonee Rheames, march logistics committee chair.

"It will allow us to have a presence at the AUC, which is really important because of the large number of GLBT youth there," Rheames said. "It will allow us to have a presence in front of the businesses we sponsor, and it will allow us to be seen at the West End Mall."

While this year's plans are reportedly moving forward smoothly, the event has not always been easy to pull together.

Early in 2001, ITLA pulled out as event organizer, citing a lack-luster 2000 Black Gay Pride and a dwindling volunteer base.

Whether official events beyond nightclub promotions and private parties would take place remained in question until ITLA and other groups rallied and pulled together the traditional festivities in the eleventh hour.

In 2000, a "Welcome to Black Gay Pride" banner was taken down at Hartsfield International Airport after 18 people complained. The banner was re-hung within hours, according to mayoral staffers.

With community involvement, such problems can be avoided, ITLA organizers said.

"We're here and we march and we celebrate to be present, to be seen and to be recognized," said Michael Slaughter, ITLA co-chair. "The African-American community has a closed mind when it comes to homosexuality -- some still believe there is no homosexuality within the African-American community. But we're here, and we do make a difference."

The two-hour town hall meeting alternately entertained and challenged attendees to become more involved in their community.

INFO

Black Gay Pride
Aug. 29 - Sept. 2, 2002
Atlanta Downtown
Renaissance Hotel
590 W. Peachtree St. NW
Atlanta, GA 30308
404-881-6000

In The Life Atlanta
P.O. Box 7206
Atlanta, GA 30357-0206
404-872-6410
www.inthelifeatl.com

Atlanta playwrights Marion Harvey and Craig Stewart presented monologue portions from their new production "Day in the Life." Atlanta spoken word artists The Adodi Muse: A Gay Negro Ensemble performed, as did singer Jade Mac Turner.

"Now that you're out of the closet, what are you going to do about the rest of your house?" asked speaker David Smith. "When we decided to be free, we knew there was a price to pay. Involvement is part of that price."

The price of involvement in the Black Gay Pride festivities will cost more for those not already enrolled. The host hotel's group rate block of 300 rooms is already sold out at $80 a night, according to hotel officials. Rates are now being quoted at $124 to $144 a night.

Atlanta Black Gay Pride is part of a circuit of black gay pride events in Miami, Houston, D.C., Tampa, Chicago, Los Angeles, Memphis, Detroit, New York and Dallas. Falling on Labor Day weekend, the Atlanta event marks the end of the summer Black Gay Pride season, according to ITLA.

Jennifer J. Smith can be reached at **jsmith@sovo.com**.

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Positive lesbians of color exchanging powerful, productive & educational ways of dealing w/ our everyday challenges.

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Phone: (404) 250-7950

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Brothers Back 2 Back

African-American HIV/AIDS support group.

Address: POB 11366, Atlanta 30310

Phone: (770) 593-5805

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